

August 2004



New CPR-1st Aid Provider

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

The Safety staff has used American Red Cross materials to teach CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and First Aid classes for the past ten years. Beginning this month we will be using new materials from the American Heart Association (AHA) in teaching these courses. The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) recognizes both agencies in meeting life saving training requirements. Marshall Fowler, Holly Bockow and Bernie Lee became certified recently to teach the AHA Heartsaver First Aid with CPR and AED classes. The new class format will be much the same but there will be some differences.

The Heartsaver First Aid course teaches employees first on the scene of a worker injury or illness to effectively recognize and treat adult emergencies in the critical first minutes until emergency medical services personnel arrive. The Heartsaver CPR course also includes recognizing the warning signs of heart attack, stroke, breathing problems and other life-threatening emergencies such as choking and cardiac arrest.

Like the American Red Cross courses, the AHA Heartsaver courses use a video format where employees are allowed hands-on practice sessions and discuss case scenarios after watching the video.

Why Switch to AHA?

If AHA is so similar to American Red Cross, why switch? The Safety office has several key goals in providing you training.

Our first goal is to provide training required by an employee's job description and in accordance with OSHA regulations. Several OSHA standards require employees, especially those working around confined spaces and high voltage electricity, to be trained and certified in first aid to include CPR. Though not required, other employees are encouraged under Homeland Security recommendations to be trained to provide care in case of injuries from natural disasters (severe thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires), assaults in the workplace, and from catastrophes resulting from terrorist events.

A second goal is to provide effective and high-quality instruction. There is much information about first aid and CPR on the Internet. There are even courses on-line where one can get "certified" in first aid and CPR. However, there are only a few that are recognized authorities. OSHA recognizes the American Red Cross, the National Safety Council, the American Heart Association and a few other organizations to provide this training. In fact, the National Safety Council and AHA teamed up to create the Heartsaver courses. Having actual hands-on practice of essential life saving and care-giving skills reinforces what you learn and you will be more likely to remember what is needed should you come across an emergency situation. Refresher

training is also beneficial because without practice and review we all tend to forget.

A third goal is economy – providing these courses at the minimal cost. When comparing American Red Cross with AHA, the initial costs were about the same. However, AHA has a lower cost in the long run. This is due to refresher training. The American Red Cross requires CPR training every year and training for first aid every third year to retain certification. AHA differs in that CPR is only required every other year. Though AHA only requires initial training for first aid, OSHA requires it every three years so General Services will continue on a three-year cycle for first aid training.

General Services Safety is switching to the AHA Heartsaver First Aid with CPR and AED courses because they best meet our goals of meeting training requirements, provide effective and high-quality instruction with a nationally recognized certification program, and are expected to save costs.

Automatic External Defibrillator (AEDs)

About 500,000 Americans die each year from heart disease and over half of these are from sudden cardiac arrest. Most of these deaths occur at work, home or while recreating or shopping. These deaths often happen because an electric shock (defibrillation) device is not available before emergency rescue services personnel arrive.

Both the AED and CPR are techniques that can be used in emergencies when someone has gone into cardiac arrest — an often-fatal condition in which the person loses consciousness as a result of the heart's inability to pump enough blood to the rest of the body. Although CPR is a vital life-sustaining tool, it cannot restore the heart rhythm of the patient. Defibrillation can.

The chance of surviving cardiac arrest decreases by 10 percent with every minute that ticks by without defibrillation. However, it takes valuable time for the paramedics to arrive and to transport the victim to a hospital. Defibrillation attempts should begin within five to six minutes of the onset of cardiac arrest, which is why groups such as the American

Heart Association advocate the widespread availability and use of AEDs.

The sooner a shock is administered to restore normal rhythm to the victim's heart, the greater the chances for the victim to survive. OSHA Administrator John Henshaw said, "Immediate defibrillation can revive more than 90% of victims." In the past, first responders have had to rely on the less effective CPR procedures while waiting for the medical personnel to arrive. The American Heart Association and a concerned medical community developed a greatly simplified defibrillator and backed passage in 2000 of the Cardiac Arrest Survival Act that encourages public access to defibrillators. They estimate 20,000 lives would be saved every year in the United States if AEDs were more widely available.

General Services Safety recently applied for but did not receive a Homeland Security grant to install AEDs throughout many of our facilities. We continue to work with various vendors and grant agencies with the goal to make these simple to use and life-saving devices available. We have been reminded several times of their importance when they aren't there and one of our own shows signs of heart problems. When we are successful in getting AEDs, Safety will provide training.



AEDs are as simple to use as 1-2-3 and when used in conjunction with CPR within the first few minutes after a heart attack can significantly increase the victim's chance of survival. General Services Safety is attempting to have AEDs installed throughout our facilities.